

FTR

My name is Maria Stellabotte.

I am in support of Bill # 974, which is an Act Concerning Group Health Insurance Coverage for an Alternative Therapy in the Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

My address is 227 Nott Street, Wethersfield, CT. 06109  
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I have a child that is nine years old and severely Autistic, non-verbal with speech apraxia.

What RDI has done for us. It is a Functional way of communication, even if you don't have words. Knowing that if your shirt is dirty you might want to change it to something clean or if the bread has mold on it you can't eat it, you might get sick. To cook for themselves, know when to turn the oven on and off. To have the ability to have functional skills that we use every day in life. It is thinking and problem solving for yourself, where these areas are so hard for Autistic children to achieve. RDI gets to the core deficits of Autism. A child looking to the parent for social referencing to solve problems. Teaching them to trust the parent. Giving them the ability to bounce back when they encounter a problem and not to fall apart. RDI gives our children a chance of a Quality of Life. Where they can function in society and not be staring at a window in a group home. I don't want that for my son. He has the ability to do so much more. RDI has taught me to guide my son. I only wish I could continue it.

My son George has been on a ABA programs since the age of 16 months. He has been so prompt dependent and wouldn't do anything with out me prompting him. For example pull your pants down, pull up your pants after going to the bathroom, which he could not do up until 4 months ago when we began RDI. Another example, teaching the child to put different color shapes in box and waiting for the next cue. Ridiculous, this is not functional everyday life.

My son is now nine years old. What RDI has done to help my son, is to think for himself and problem solve. He has begun to improve in all functional everyday life. He now goes to the bathroom and doesn't wait to be prompted. He looks at me and smiles and is proud of himself for doing it on his own.

We have only taken around 4 months of RDI and I can honestly say it has been the most beneficial therapy with my son. I had to pay out of my pocket, being a single mother and working part time with state insurance and ex-husband's private insurance not covering RDI. We had to discontinue because I can't afford it which is heart breaking. My son could go so much further in life, if we could continue RDI.

Thank you,

Maria Stellabotte